

WASHINGTON – U.S. Congressman Allen Boyd (D-North Florida) [sent a letter](#) to the director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service urging him to detail the preparations his organization has put in place to mitigate the potential the BP oil spill could have on St. Vincent National Wildlife Refuge and St. Marks Wildlife Refuge.

“While efforts are underway to see that our beaches are protected and our local communities are made whole from the economic damages they have sustained, we must also be taking proactive measure to ensure that our most sensitive ecosystems are protected from the devastating damage oil would cause to them,” said Congressman Boyd. “It would be catastrophic if oil were to infect St. Vincent and St. Marks, two national treasures that are home to more than 10 unique habitats and countless animal species that are currently on the endangered species list. Proper precautions can and should already be put in place, and my letter is designed to serve as an insurance policy to make sure that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has an aggressive and competent plan in place for protecting these at-risk areas.”

In the letter, Boyd writes: “It is my obligation as a Representative to be sure that these areas are protected from any kind of environmental threat. I want to let my constituents know that every effort possible is being taken to prevent any destruction to St. Vincent and St. Marks. I am specifically requesting the Fish and Wildlife Service’s plan to ensure the safety of these wildlife refuges in Florida’s Second district.”

This letter builds on Congressman Boyd’s commitment to protect Northwest Florida from known threats and ensure that local communities are receiving economic relief as quickly as possible.

Last week, Congressman Boyd brought together representatives from federal and state emergency response agencies and key local stakeholders to discuss the effect a hurricane would have on the oil currently in the Gulf of Mexico and the impact it would have on North Florida’s communities. The conference identified actions that need to be incorporated into current hurricane response plans in order to efficiently and effectively protect our communities and people from the threat posed by having oil propelled inland. Congressman Boyd plans to follow up with the appropriate agencies responsible for implementing these action items and deliver the recommendations and findings from the conference to the President.

Earlier this month, Congressman Boyd voted to prevent any disruption to the clean-up and

containment efforts currently underway in the Gulf by authorizing the federal government to provide advance funding from the Oil Spill Liability Trust Fund to sustain and support these activities. The legislation calls for BP to repay the full cost of this advance funding.

Last month, Congressman Boyd sponsored legislation that would hold oil companies fully accountable for the economic damage caused by oil spills. Oil companies are already responsible for the full cost of environmental clean-up efforts. Boyd's legislation would raise the current cap from \$75 million to \$10 billion, ensuring that oil companies – and not the taxpayers – bear the cost for all economic damages resulting from oil spills.

More information on the BP oil spill crisis and Congressman Boyd's efforts to protect North Florida can be found at [www.boyd.house.gov/oilspill](http://www.boyd.house.gov/oilspill) .

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[Read Congressman Boyd's letter sent to the Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.](#)

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**CONTACT:**

Christopher Cashman, 202-225-5235